

THE FORCE OF FACTS AND FIGURES.

(By Channing Severance.)

Nothing has greater force in carrying conviction to rational minds than facts and figures, for these are things that demonstrate truths and defy refutation. When you have a fact that can be shown and demonstrated, you have the best of an argument with any opponent, and can knock him out in one round if he will face it.

As freethinkers, we have the facts and figures to show that Christianity is not only the biggest fake and humbug in the world, but the greatest failure when the realization of promises and predictions are taken into consideration.

Christianity has always claimed to be a divinely inspired religion, with qualities superior to all others, and a dead certainty of some day being the one and only religion on this earth. Claiming to have come direct from God, the Creator and Controller of the Universe, it declared he could and would insure such a condition, and so this boast and predictive affirmation was made: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Christianity has entered the 20th century of its existence, and by looking backward we can see what it has done, and by computing results we can see how near this prediction is to being verified. It has claimed much, promised more, and accomplished little. Instead of being the one and supreme religion after all this lapse of time, it is not even first in point of numbers among other religions, for Buddhism exceeds it by many millions, and a new religion founded by Mahomet, the Arabian camel driver nearly 600 years after Christianity started, has 170 million devotees, whose knees refuse to bow to the name of Jesus, and whose tongues if they speak his name, utter it in derision and contempt.

With all the exaggerations that Christians make regarding their numbers, their highest claim leaves them numerically less than one-fifth of the population of the earth. If this is the best they could do, with God's help, in over 1900 years, they must if honest and candid, admit that Mahomet has exerted greater power to do things than God and Jesus together; for comparatively he has done a greater work in the 1300 years just passed than Jesus the leader and Savior of all mankind, and Jehovah.

Is not this fact, alone, sufficient to knock all divine claims out of Christianity? To a reasonable man it must be, for where there is nothing to show that an omnipotent God is boosting Christianity, there is nothing to base belief on that he is. If that hell-fire and damnation religion had gone ahead and converted the whole world, as it expected to and said it should, then it would have had a fact that no opponent could have failed to be influenced by, and everybody being Christians, there would have been no opponents. This is a very plain presentation of the case, and as Christianity is now dying of dry rot and its power is waning every day that comes and goes, it is over and a chance to influence the whole world, that time is past and gone. When this religion attained its greatest power and had the most converts, it was using fire and sword, force and violence to make converts; and the moment it ceased to use such means for that purpose, that moment it began to wane and weaken, to droop and die.

Christianity has never been the same force in the world since it ceased to be a militant power, and it never will be again, for talk alone is not sufficient to make people accept it. When they had to, or go to prison and have their property confiscated, it was easy to catch 'em for Christ's sake and the glory of God. When the Inquisition was in force and all its implements of torture were being used to make Christians that Bible prophecies might be fulfilled, it was a bold man indeed who would refuse to accept this religion of "love and mercy," and that was the time when every one in Christian lands was a Christian, professed to be, or had to migrate, as did the Moors when driven out of Spain.

Tolerance was never a feature of Christianity when it had unrestrained power; but with fire and force it failed completely to accomplish its intentions; and I now throw this fact into the face of every Christian that exists to show that what it failed to do in the past it cannot possibly do in the future. There is no more show for converting the world to Christ, than there is for seeing all men think alike or look alike; and the rotten stuff put forth in his name will be more and more rejected as the world rolls on. Facts and figures

prove this statement, for as eminent a Christian as Rev. Charles Russell, of Brooklyn Tabernacle, admits there are double the number of heathen in the world today than there were 100 years ago, and we do not have to go out of your own so-called Christian country to find by government figures that only a little over one-third of our people are professed Christians and church members; and such a poor showing ten years ago is what caused Christian influence to have noses in the census of 1910. That fact has been thrown at them so many times it caused a sore spot, and it irritates our Christian friends much to hear of it. It certainly is a fact that speaks very loudly, and facts not in their favor are offensive things to be suppressed, if possible.

Russell, and see what he is compelled to admit, though why he said it when the policy of Christians is to blow hard and claim everything, is not clear:

"If we look out upon the heathen world, however sympathetic we may be in respect to foreign missionary work, doing all in our power to make known to the heathen the grace of God, and the Great Redeemer, we are nevertheless compelled to admit that there is absolutely no hope of our ever causing every knee to bow and every tongue to confess Christ in heathen lands, even as we have long ago given up hope of accomplishing such work in civilized lands."

This is plain talk and right to the point, and in spite of his religion, is evidence of a streak of horse sense and candor not to be found very often in a Christian preacher.

The Methodists, who keep boasting of building a church every day, should chew up and digest, or reflect on this true statement by comrade Russell, of the universal brotherhood that Christ wanted to establish, with the Jew God as the basic idea to work on.

No, men and brethren, fellow citizens, saints and sinners, there is mighty little consolation in facts and figures for Christianity, for they plainly show the doom which awaits it, which in the process of time will be just what all religious systems experience—death and oblivion.

It is now dying, an undisputable evidence shows, but we cannot expect a quick death, for such never comes to superstition in any form, but the very fact it is in decline and surely passing away, is a source of joy and gladness to all rational human beings, who know its true history and what a curse it has ever been to humanity.

To Pastor Charles Russell and other mourners, I extend my condolence for their mental sufferings, for sympathy is one of my strong characteristics; but at the same time, I am very glad that is occurring which causes them to weep and wail.

So "Let her go, Gallagher!" and the sooner the better.
Los Angeles, Calif.

A FIRST CAUSE.

What Caused It to Cause a Universe 6,000 Years, and Not 60,000,000 Years Ago?

(Otto Wettstein, in Freethinkers' Magazine.)

There is no "First Cause," there never was a "First Cause." Within an eternal self-existent universe, evolving processes are eternal.

It never began—it can never end. A single particle of matter cannot be created, neither can it be annihilated. Consequently the universe, being composed of eternal existing particles, is eternal. And each particle represents energy and force—being energy and force—has ever been active to perpetuate the evolutionary processes of finite forms, beings and bodies; but these, by virtue of their own potencies being destined to final destruction and disintegration, tend in infinite variation and transformation, to perpetuate the process forever.

All attempts to solve the riddle of cosmic existence by postulating a "First Cause," or "God," existing prior and exterior of the universe, must and will ever remain efforts of childish reasoning and a lamentable failure. It explains nothing. It simply divests the visible everything of and invests an invisible nothing with potencies or power to cause all phenomena. But after this cunning coup d'état, the identical mysteries which first prompted such a solution still stare us in the face, even in augmented degree.

A "First Cause," or "God," implies an infinite something—of which however, we know absolutely nothing—possessing attributes and powers superior to those existing in nature, and amply sufficient to cause to spring into existence miraculously, from pre-existing nothing, an infinite universe.

A "First Cause," or "God," must possess within itself transcendent qualities of self-existence, and all the

necessary attributes, to exist uncaused and eternal as a "First Cause," and without again necessitating, in turn, another cause to cause it.

It implies that such "First Cause" or "God," prior to the (imaginary) "beginning," was not a cause, but eternally inactive, latent, non-productive dead—an absolute condition of negation, or nothing.

That such "First Cause" during all the infinite cycle of ages, preceding such "beginning," did not produce a single effect.

It implies that after being eternally dead or inactive, and cause of absolutely nothing during all the ages of beginningless time, it did suddenly and miraculously, so stupendously change its nature as to create a universe!

And last, though not least, it presents to thinking men and women the following grotesque proposition: The universe exists, consequently a "God" or "First Cause" must have preceded it. This "First Cause" is eternal, never was created and never needed a "Creator." It, of course, is eternal, and as such existed from all time. Six thousand years ago, according to Bible chronology, this "First Cause" caused the universe. No other cause or thing existed with or beside it prior to that time. During all the ages of beginningless time, it did not cause a solitary thing—not a world, sun, moon, star, or even a single atom. Eternal darkness reigned supreme, and infinite vacuum was monopolized solely by this "First Cause."

This is a correct representation of things, existing during the eternity, prior to 6,000 years ago, when the universe, according to the Christian mythology "began!"

But now the question arises, what caused the "First Cause," after an eternity of non-activity, to create the universe? Here certainly is a magnificent and imposing effect (if true). The Theist's "God" or "First Cause," certainly didn't cause it, for what these would not do or cause to be done during the vast eternity preceding this (imaginary) creation. They of course, would never do this "First Cause" is supposed to be omniscient, omnipresent, and unchangeable, consequently what this "First Cause" could or would not do during 9,999,999,999,999,999—continued ad infinitum—years preceding the "beginning," it, of course, would never do.

What, then, caused the universe or created the "First Cause," or "God" to create it, after an eternity of non-existence? There is no effect without a cause. But for an eternity all existing causes had not produced a universe, what in the name of reason, then, WAS THE CAUSE which caused the "First Cause" to create the universe when it did? But I need go no further—a cause being needed to cause the "First Cause" to cause or to precede the "First Cause" of the Theist. If we keep on in our crucial test of "First Causes," we will, no doubt, need another "First Cause," and another, and another, ad infinitum.

Thus we see that all argument predicated a "First Cause," a "God," a "Creation," or a "Beginning," does not explain, but infinitely mystifies, existing problems and that the only rational assumption is the eternal existence of all matter, which, possessing within itself all the necessary attributes of self-existence and self-formation (not creation), needs no "Creator," or "First Cause," to create, or manipulate it.

Existing today, absolutely proves that in its elementary form it has always existed, and so will always exist. Furthermore, assuming harmony and order today, and evolving worlds, suns, systems, trees, flowers and men, proves it has ever evolved such forms, and that, consequently, there never was a first world, sun, tree or man; but all such phenomena are but repetitions of similar phenomena having evolved forever.

Because it is plain that any particular first world, sun, or system, would again imply an eternity of time preceding the formation of such first phenomena, but which, if true, would absolutely have prevented such first world, sun or system, at any time. It is either eternal standstill or eternal activity—both cannot be true.

Which, then, I ask, is the most reasonable, that a "First Cause," of which we know absolutely nothing, can exist uncaused, and then from nothing create an infinite universe, or that the latter, which today exists in august splendor—self-evident, and real—is self-existent and eternal?

Is it a fact that curates generally visit Christian homes when the husband is at work?

The clergy are no orators for their partiality to the fair sex, and purr around the ladies like black tom-cats.

MAN OF HIGH IDEALS.

"So you don't care to encourage that young poet with his ethereal ideas," interrogated the cigar salesman.

"I don't care a continental about his ethereal ideas," growled the groceryman, "as long as they don't cost me anything."

"Did they ever cost you anything?" "I should say so! The other day he came in and, raising his right hand, struck a dramatic attitude and said, 'I love everything that's good.' Then with his left hand he helped himself to the candied citron and the 60 cent almonds. I don't doubt that he likes things that are good, but blamed if he's going to make this a supply station."

When He Needed Company.

"Brother Philander," said the Osborne Farmer's village deacon, "our minister has worked hard and seems discouraged. Isn't there some way we can show our appreciation of his worth and cheer him up?" "Well," replied old Philander, "we might try attending the midweek prayer meeting. That is his loneliest hour."

Took Precautions.

"I want to hire a canoe." "Accustomed to rowing one, I suppose?" "Never was in one." "Can you swim?" "Not a stroke." "Well, you pay double and in advance. I've been left in the lurch by enough suicides."

A Vivid Portrayal.

"Why, my dear," expostulated Mr. Pomponby, "I wasn't drunk last night. I was merely imitating a drunk man to fool you."

"Well," sniffed Mrs. Pomponby, "all I have to say is, if that was an imitation you are wasting your talents in the grocery business. You'd draw \$100 a week in vaudeville."

Education.

The House—What piece will you have, Miss Tootsie.
Miss Tootsie—Please carve me the lozenge tangent east to 76 segment above the loin diagonal to fat parallel to—Oh, I beg pardon; I learned the cuts in cooking school.—Fuck.

No, Indeed.

"I heard a man worth \$1,000,000 wish he had some small change." "Pshaw! A man doesn't have to be worth \$1,000,000 to wish that."

MORE SLEEP WANTED.



The Deacon—Parson, I wish you could make your sermons a little longer.

The Preacher (pleased)—Why so? The Deacon—Well, it seems like I hardly get to sleep before it's time to get up.

It Wasn't Real.

Last night I had a juicy steak. But, sad to say, Was soon awake.

How He Did It.

"How," asked the young lady as she looked with admiration at the rugged nonagenarian, "have you managed to live so long and preserve your health so well?"

By rigorously declining to practise what my friends have preached," he candidly replied.

Slightly Mixed.

"What was the lesson at school this afternoon, Tommy?" asked the fond parent.

Had a reading on the destruction of Tyre," responded the youngster. "H'm! Automobile accident, I suppose?"

Partly So.

"My good woman, does the system of visualization seem to take with your children at school?"

"Not all of 'em, mum. The doctor said wid Mamie and Tommy it has took fine, but Billy's ain't took a bit."

Too-Faced.

"You say he is two-faced?" "I say he is too-faced; his wife has him so well trained that he never opens his face except to say 'me, too.'"

A Queer Sort.

"What sort of fellow is Lathers?" "He puts the accent on the first syllable of the word 'hotel.'"

Its Style.

"That singer has a velvet voice." "I suppose that accounts for the pile she gets from it."

DO YOU?

"Six days come round—Of course they do; I'll just be bound They've come to you

And made you cross As everything And left no heart

In you to sing. Nor any wish To labor more—So tired and sad And sick and sore.

We all have days Of sober brown, When we are blue And frown and frown.

And grumble, too, And fume and fret. That's how we all Ways act and yet.

Although there's some Excuse for such, I don't see how It helps us much!

PERCY KNEW.



Algy—The beauty of this play, Percy, is— Percy—Oh, that second one from the end there, I'll bet.

Great Shrinkage.

The last year's bathing suit will shrink. And shrink both day and night; Until at last it shrinks so much The bather shrinks from sight.

All the Same.

"What is the trouble with your husband of late, Mrs. Green?" asked the corner grocer. "He acts queerly."

"In what way?" queried Mrs. Green in surprise. "Why, he came in here the other day and asked for a pound of 'Rocky-feller butter.' Never heard of such a thing."

"Oh, that's all right. John couldn't think of 'petroleum butter.'"

Things Will Take a Turn.

It was the kind of banquet we sometimes read about. The tables fairly groaned under their load of good things. But the hungry guests quickly relieved them of their burden. After-dinner speeches were next in order. Then it was the guests who groaned.

The Lure.

Lady—I want to put in this advertisement for a cook. It will go in three lines, won't it?

Clerk (after counting)—No, madam. We'll have to charge you for four lines, but you can put in four more words, if you wish.

Lady (suddenly inspired)—Say: "Police-man stationed opposite corner!"—Tilt-Bits.

Blasted Hopes.

Mr. Stubb—Maria, do you remember that millinery store that had such a great display of fall hats? Well, there has been a fire down there and everything is reduced—

Mrs. Stubb—Gracious, what a chance for bargains! And everything is reduced, John?

Mr. Stubb—Yes, reduced to ashes.

EVIDENTLY SOMETHING ELSE.



Bleeker—I hear he died of appendicitis.

Boxter—Oh, it couldn't have been that; why, that was what they operated on him for.

That's So.

The bee is like a man. All up And down the world he beats it; He gathers honey all his life—Some other fellow eats it.

The Oracle Explains.

Student of Politics—And what be really this here coalition they do be talking about?

Oldest Living Local Authority—Well, it's like this. Some parties says this, an' some says that an' 't'her. But, what I says, there no knowins nor no tellins, an'—mark my words! I hain't far wrong.—Fuck.

NOT THE SAME.

"Mother," queried the pretty daughter, "did father have his salary increased when he married you?" "No, dear," answered the mother. "How much was he getting?" "Only ten dollars a week." "But I suppose he had a lot of money saved up, didn't he?" "Not a dollar; he spent his money as fast as he earned it." "Did you get along comfortably?" "Yes; and we were very happy." "Well, mother, you know dear George hasn't been able to save a cent, but—"

Tricky Sandy.

While passing by an old-fashioned inn the tourists were attracted by an ancient bagpiper, who was tooting atrocious sounds through an instrument that was both dilapidated and squeaky.

"Great Jericho, Sandy!" exclaimed one in desperation. "Why don't you have your bagpipes repaired?"

And the old man ceased playing and looked up in astonishment. "Havers, mon, ye dinna understand. If ma bagpipes wor in good tune the inn mon winna give ma two shillings to move on."

Too Much of a Good Thing.

"Our gas meter," said the alleged funny man, who was trying to make light of his bill for illumination, "reminds me of a centipede."

"What's the answer?" queried the innocent bystander.

"It has so many unnecessary feet, you know," replied the other.

After being out 13 seconds the jury returned a verdict of "justifiable homicide" and the innocent bystander was discharged from custody.

The Spendthrift.

Tjarks—See where some astronomer says Halley's comet may charge the earth's atmosphere and we'll never have any more rain.

Bjens—By George! Give me that item to take home.

Tjarks—Interested, eh?

Bjens—I should say so! I am going to show it to my wife every time she nags me about saving up for a rainy day.

"WHAT NEVER? WELL, HARDLY EVER!"



Lovelorn—Oh, Myrtilla, you don't really and truly mean that you'll never, never see me or speak to me again?

Myrtilla—Yes, sir, I do, and when you call tomorrow evening I'll tell you why.

Skeptical.

"Little Boy Blue," said the modern kid, "It's now up to you to show me if you really are Little Boy Blue, And have any horn to blow."

Another Hero.

"He's a champion, is he? He doesn't look it. Champion of what?"

"You don't keep abreast of the times. He's the champion cigarroot smoker; lights one with the stump of another, rolls them himself as he goes along, and smokes sixty without letting any of 'em go out."

Danger.

"Be like the early bird, my son," advised the fond parent, "and you will catch the worm."

But the up-to-date youngster shrugged his shoulders.

"No early-bird business for me," he responded, forcibly, "I might catch the hookworm."

Perplexing Case.

Professor (after calling on blank and waiting for him to rectify)—Seems to me, Blank, you ought to be able to answer my question with all the prompting you're getting back there.

Blank—Well, professor, there's such a difference of opinion around me that—The Gargoyle.

A Suspicion.

"What is a political rainbow chaser?"

"There are various kinds," replied Senator Sorghum, "although I suspect that most of them are more or less influenced by the legend that every rainbow has a pot of gold at the end of it."

Gentle Persuasion.

McCorkle—Is it right to speak of a man as the "male persuasion?"

McCorkle—It is if the subject is unmarried.

McCorkle—What has that to do with it?

McCorkle—Why, if he is married his wife persuades him.